

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS  
UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY  
DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The Committees.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

The changes in the cast of committees in the House are not so general as to give a new complexion to the prospects of business in that body. The Ways and Means Committee retains its chairman, and the strong members who have given vigor to its warfare for the public credit and the revenue. Mr. Dawes still succeeds Mr. Washburne as chairman of Appropriations—though we wish we could feel sure that he will be as vigilant and as resolute in watching against raid upon the Treasury as his predecessor. Goldfield is transferred from the chairmanship of Military Affairs to that of Banking and Currency, on the special subjects coming before which he is a recognized authority. He, at least, may be counted on to resist the tendency—also represented on his committee—to another expansion of the currency. Judge Bligham, who succeeds James F. Wilson as chairman of the Judiciary, has a standing secured by long and able service in the House, that seem to warrant his appointment. He has wide reputation in his profession, though it has been rather as an advocate than a profound master of the law that he has won his laurels. General Butler has been placed where he is most in accord with his party, at the head of the Reconstruction Committee. These, and indeed nearly all the other assignments, are sure to receive severe criticism from interested parties. The cast of committees that shall satisfy all concerned has yet to be seen.

General Grant's Administration.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The Copperhead press has opened a lively fire on General Grant. What for? What do they want? On this plan what is to become of the Democratic party under Grant's administration? The prospect is foggy. The party entered into the late Presidential campaign strongly impressed with the idea that the contest to them was less a struggle for the spoils than for existence. The Democratic leaders and managers, still wearing their Jeffersonian green goggles of State rights and State sovereignty, still limited in their vision to "the Constitution as it was," proceeded upon this theory—that we must win this election at all hazards, in order to overthrow the radical policy or to prevent the fulfillment of their reconstruction system, negro suffrage and negro equality included, and their financial system; for otherwise all these things will be consummated, the Government will be based on a new basis, and we shall not have a Democratic principle left to fight for or a plank to stand upon.

Hence, with the encouraging election results of 1867, the tenacious and desperate struggle of the Democracy under Seymour and Blair to carry the October State elections of 1868 in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana; for they well knew that the fate of their national ticket and organization hung upon those elections. Failing at every point in these decisive October trials, they virtually gave up the contest, and prepared in New York to cover their retreat so as to save their army from dispersion and their supply trains from capture. They had aimed at nothing less than the restoration of Johnson's policy of reconstruction and the application of Pundit's system of finance, negro rights as defined in the Dred Scott decision, and the Constitution as expounded by Calhoun. They sought, in short, under Seymour for "the Union as it was," barring the abolition of slavery; and with the defeat of Seymour all was lost. They fought to recover their old Southern Democratic balance of power on the issues settled by the war; and in every election since the war, and at the close of the battle, they were an army of drift.

The next great event affecting the interests and prospects of the drifting Democracy is the incoming of the new administration. The leading Copperhead organs of the party prick up their ears to catch the first sound of the inaugural. They hear it, but they do not like it. It means negro suffrage, Southern reconstruction as adopted by Congress, and gold to the bondholders. They wait next for the Cabinet, and with its announcement these very fastidious Copperhead organs utter Herod's in their denunciations of the appointment of Mr. Stewart as Secretary of State and of Mr. Stewart as Secretary of the Treasury. The whole Cabinet they think absurd and outrageous; but A. T. Stewart for the Treasury, above all things, they contend, gives General Grant a thick coat of varnish, coated ignorance in daring to put his will above the law of 1879. Next Mr. Stewart retires and Mr. Boutwell is appointed to the Treasury; and yet these Copperheads organs are not satisfied. A man of practical abilities, they say, is charged for a noisy, pretensions, and shallow politician. Moreover, they have to lament the surrender of Grant to the radical leaders. Worse than all, in stopping certain whiskey ring pardons of Johnson, Grant has violated the Constitution, as it appears, and in everything that he does or attempts to do he illustrates the old story, they say, of the bull in a china shop. As presented by the Copperhead organ of the Manhattan ring, General Grant is a blunderer, a sort of despot, and yet a willing servant of the radical politicians, and an ignorant soldier, withal, whose only distant idea of his position is that it was given him to enable him to provide fat places for his family and his personal friends.

What can be the meaning of all this Copperhead fault-finding and baldness? It means that the Copperhead leaders and managers are sounding the alarm to the perplexed Democracy to beware of the temptations of Grant's administration; that the party must prepare to fight Grant as a sworn enemy, and not to cultivate him as a friend in disguise—another Andy Johnson. His inaugural and his Cabinet, they are told, proclaim his radicalism; the restoration of Sheridan to New Orleans fixed his sympathy with the carpet-bagger, and his removal of General Blair as a Pacific Railway Commissioner proves the hostility of Grant to Democratic office-holders, and that they are to have not even a sop in the pots and pans of the kitchen. "To your tents, then, O Israel!" Stick to your party, stick to your Democratic principles, and let your war cry be, "Down with this radical administration!"

Was there ever such stupidity? Is it impossible to teach these Democratic Bourbon anything? In any event we must tell them that before the year 1872 Southern reconstruction will be settled and fixed, and negro suffrage will be fixed, and the payment of the national debt will be provided for, and of the old Democratic notions of State sovereignty not a scrap will be left. The Tammany platform of 1868 will be—yes, is now—as dead as the Whig platform of 1862. We can tell them, further, that Democratic hostility to Grant's administration will only contribute to clear the field for his reelection in 1872; and that, with nothing but dead issues and dead men to fight for, the Democratic politicians and Copperhead organs cannot hold the party

together till the next national campaign. If they are wise, meantime, they will give General Grant a free rein and prepare for a new departure, and await their coming opportunity to cut in between his administration and the extreme radical faction.

Some Men Who Are Not in the Cabinet.

From the N. Y. World.

We are among those who are willing to be pleased, and, as we can find little to approve in the Cabinet which President Grant has selected, we will try to console ourselves by the contemplation of some of the names he has omitted. Bad as the Cabinet is, it might have been worse. The new Cabinet is merely weak, whereas it might have been wicked. Among the conspicuous Republicans who have been omitted from it, there is no one whose rejection gives greater satisfaction to Democrats than Edwin M. Stanton.

Stanton made stump speeches for Grant, and, during the early part of the winter, his name appeared on all the cabinet lists. Nobody seemed quite sure whether he was to be the head of the State or of the Treasury Department; but his friends credited him with so much administrative energy that they supposed the new President could hardly get on without him. And it is true enough that this impetuous man is an able executive officer. Gratifying as it is to Democrats that Stanton is not appointed, his rejection reflects no great credit upon General Grant. He is so much abler an administrator than General Grant himself that the new President would have been eclipsed by his own satellite; and if there to any principle which he has constructed his Cabinet, it is that he will tolerate no man in it who could ever become his rival. Stanton's impetuous efficiency would therefore have excluded him, even if General Grant had had no other objections to him. But Stanton had shown, in his treatment of President Johnson, that he was totally destitute of loyalty to his official chief. General Grant very properly did not wish to have such a character among his confidential advisers; and, in the course of the winter, it came out through General Banks that Stanton had intrigued against Grant himself previous to the capture of Vicksburg. The zeal with which General Grant rewards his friends and pays his debts of personal gratitude at the public expense, made it impossible for him to bestow office upon Stanton after he discovered that he had intrigued to deprive him of his command and arrest him in what proved to be a great career. But, whatever may have been the motives for excluding Stanton, it is a satisfaction to see that bold, faithless man reduced to hopeless insignificance.

For a year or two, the Republican party made Stanton the chief point of the politics of the country. By his intrigues with leading members of Congress he satisfied them that he was the enemy of President Johnson and a spy upon his actions; and it was solely with a view to retain him at the head of the War Department that the Tenure-of-Office act was extended to members of the Cabinet. Stanton, the better to conceal the double part he was playing, gave an opinion in the Cabinet that the law was unconstitutional, although intending at the time to use it for the destruction of the President. When asked to resign, he refused; when suspended, he said he yielded only to superior force; and when, after his restoration by the Senate, the order was issued for his removal, he forthwith sent it to the House of Representatives as a basis of impeachment. The whole impeachment trial was a battle fought by Republicans in behalf of Stanton. But the new President, who protested against his removal and aided in his restoration, had deserted and ignored him, and treated him with contempt. Having lent himself to base uses to ingratiate himself with the Republicans, and even aspired to be their candidate for the Presidency, Stanton is now flung aside as he deserves. He will have ample time to consider whether treachery and baseness have improved his position before the country. We have reason to be thankful that General Grant has motives of some kind for neglecting and repudiating Stanton.

Another man who was talked of prominently in connection with a place in the Cabinet, for the last month or two before the inauguration, was Joseph Holt. Holt is an able man, and a majority of the Cabinet; but all honorable men should rejoice that he is excluded, even though he is supplanted by men of moderate capacity and no experience. There are few men who made themselves more odious during the war, and immediately after its close, than this man Holt. The appointment either of him or of Stanton to a place in the Cabinet would have been a gross and gratuitous insult to the South, as well as a blot on a great political party nearly as large as that by which General Grant was elected. Although there is no man who has made himself particularly odious to Democrats, with Stanton, and Holt, and Butler excluded, we are saved from the most insulting appointments that could have been made. We must do General Grant the justice to say that, in making his Cabinet, he has not gone out of his way to find men offensive to the Democratic party. Our objection to the new Cabinet is, that it does not carry heavy enough; that it is deficient in capacity and experience; not that men have been selected whom the Democratic party regards with loathing.

The Opposition to the Fifteenth Amendment.

From the N. Y. Times.

The extremists of both parties in Georgia oppose the ratification of the pending constitutional amendment for reasons which prove its expediency and justice. The violent Democrats assail it because it permanently removes from the partisan arena the essential element of the suffrage question. They would have the whole question remain under the control of the States, in the hope that the fundamental condition of reconstruction may be some day abrogated. The violent radicals, on the other hand, for the time forgetting Wendell Phillips' prudent whispers, object that the amendment substitutes impartial for universal enfranchisement, and omits an affirmation of the colored man's right to office. The two extremes, then, meet at the point of opposition. They do not want the question disposed of. They prefer that it shall be kept open, if possible, that they may respectively appeal to the ignorance and prejudices of their adherents. The fact that two bodies of partisans, differing so widely in their ultimate purposes, are anxious to prevent the adoption of the amendment, seems to us the best possible argument in its favor. Certainly, an alliance so unnatural and unprincipled justifies the hopes that, even in Georgia, the moderate and practical men of either party will be found supporting a measure which simply recognizes a leading result of the war, and terminates an irritating controversy in a manner which guarantees an equality of political rights without forcing upon the States universal suffrage.

The ground of opposition assumed by the Indiana Democracy shows how obstinately the party clings to its traditions. The disorganizing tactics of the Democrats in the Legislature are only what might have been ex-

pected. Your Indiana Democrat is everywhere Copperhead. In none else of the Northern or Western States does the breed so distinctly retain its characteristics. We cannot be surprised, therefore, that a proposition to throw around citizenship the guarantee of equality has aroused in that State the fiercest hostility which has displayed itself at Indianapolis. So far as the Democrats there are concerned, the nullifying platform of the Fourth-of-July Convention is still the supreme law. They will not recognize reconstruction, its agencies or results. They will have no settlement which implies the manhood and citizenship of the negro. They parade the worn-out dogma, "This is a white man's government," as though it were a Divine command, and with a stolid fanaticism which shows the necessity of placing above the influence of partisan acrimony the equitable solution of the suffrage problem.

Governor Stevenson, of Kentucky, in a message compelling a refusal to ratify the amendment, indulges the passion for exaggeration and untruth which seems the usual groundwork of Democratic zeal. He treats the amendment as revolutionary, and its submission by Congress as proof positive of usurpation. "It ignores the relations" of the Federal Government to the governments of the States. "It obliterates and destroys" "the reserved rights of the States." "Its purpose," he says, "is to annihilate the States." "It is to nullify the State governments." In this style, the late Kentucky proceeds to incite the local legislators to resist the atrocious scheme. He makes no mention of the changes which have happened during the last few years. He writes as though no Rebellion had occurred, and as though slavery were still in full blast. He forgets—if, indeed, he ever knew—that the war has determined some things, including the standing of the freedman and his possession of political power in States whose exploded theory of government Kentucky still cherishes.

All this vehement protestation against Federal "usurpation" is arrant nonsense. Had Congress adopted the pretension urged by some in its behalf, respecting the right by an ordinary enactment to force universal suffrage upon all the States, this message of Governor Stevenson might have been in order. There would then have been good ground for attributing to the Federal authority a disregard of local rights as defined by the Constitution. But it is folly to talk of "revolution" or "usurpation" or "annihilated authority" when, as in this case, Congress has done no more than initiate, in the manner prescribed by the Constitution, a measure which depends for its efficiency upon the States themselves. We presume that Kentucky does not deny the lawfulness of a constitutional change if the requisite number of States give it their sanction. And if these States, through their legislatures, declare their approval of the fifteenth amendment, wherein is the Constitution violated, or the reserved power of the States obliterated and destroyed? Instead of invading States rights, Congress has in this matter recognized them, and the amendment, if ratified, will derive its force from that very consent which Governor Stevenson describes as "ignored" and "annihilated."

The amendment, as submitted to the country, embodies the idea of moderation and compromise. The presentation of the suffrage question in this shape is a triumph over the ultra opinions which in the first instance would have made Congress absolute, and in the next would have enforced universal as distinguished from impartial suffrage. It is a triumph of constitutional reform over that tendency to usurpation which at one period threatened to be dangerous. And it substantially leaves the suffrage subject to the individual action of States. They may enact qualifications of education or property, precisely as at present, and with thus how the power of regulating the franchise as to them may seem best. The only thing which the amendment will deprive them from doing is, the setting up of a distinction founded upon color or former servitude. Whatever tests are to be applied must affect white and black alike, as indeed they ought to, if their purpose be to exclude ignorance or thriftlessness from the exercise of the franchise. The old test of color is a relic of the prejudice which the Democrats of Indiana and Kentucky stupidly mistake for principle.

The Tenure-of-Office Act.

From the N. Y. World.

Mr. Trumbull, of the Senate Judiciary Committee, to which the House bill for repealing the Tenure-of-Office act had been referred, made a report on Monday, proposing a substitute for the bill, which, instead of repealing, simply suspends the operation of the act until the next session of Congress. It is supposed that in this form the bill will pass, and will leave General Grant as free as if the Tenure-of-Office act were not in existence, during the summer and autumn. This remarkable course shows that the Republican Senators have not overcome their distrust of the new President. Since the expression of his willingness to consult Senators and Representatives in his appointments, the feeling towards him has somewhat softened, and they are willing to put him on a brief probation and see how he will behave.

With the act temporarily suspended, the President can make all the removals he pleases; and the Senate probably assumes that he will turn out all Democrats, all appointees of Mr. Johnson, and all Republicans who failed to toe the mark, in order to ingratiate themselves with the late President. It is of much importance to the Republican party to get rid of all such; and General Grant's threat that he would make removals only for cause so long as he was subject to the disabilities of the Tenure-of-Office act, has probably suggested the present manoeuvre. When these classes of office-holders are removed, they can never be restored; and the persons whom General Grant selects to fill their places can hold only until the close of the next session, unless they are confirmed by the Senate. By this manoeuvre, it is hoped that all Mr. Johnson's appointees and abettors will be promptly swept away; and then, the Tenure-of-Office act coming again into force as soon as Congress meets in December, the Senate will have the whip-hand of the President, and will no longer care anything for his threats to make the Tenure-of-Office act odious to the party by strictly enforcing it. Senate does not like his new appointments, and will refuse to confirm them; and as the offices cannot be left vacant, they expect to force the President to make satisfactory appointments for the sake of getting them confirmed.

This game is so easily seen through that, if General Grant is plucky and wary, he will not be caught in the trap which the Senate is setting for him. If he should make no removals in consequence of a mere brief suspension of the Tenure-of-Office act, and await its absolute repeal, he would exhibit a coming self-respect and a proper regard for the rights and dignity of his office. If there is no good reason why he should be free from restraint during the first few months of his term which is not equally good for releasing him for the whole of it. If the law is sound in principle, it should not be suspended for any President, or for any part of his term. If confidence in General Grant were the ground of suspension, it would not have

been made temporary. To throw the reins upon his neck for a few months, just while he has time to remove Mr. Johnson's appointees, with a view to tighten them again immediately afterwards, is a more offensive mark of distrust than to leave the law in full operation. To keep the law uniformly in force might be defended on a pretence of principle; but to play fast and loose with it, as the Senate proposes to do, shows that it is meant as a mere letter on the President for party purposes, which the Senate consents to relax for a short time merely to accomplish another party purpose. Such a course proves that they neither respect the law nor trust the new President.

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